

(Washington, DC)- Today U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt has acceded to Congresswoman Gwen Moore's request that Wisconsin's SeniorCare Program be allowed to continue serving the needs of over 90,000 Wisconsin seniors by providing them with prescription drugs at an affordable price at least through June 30, 2007. Had this extension not been granted, SeniorCare might have been forced to shut down, or seniors who wanted to continue to benefit from SeniorCare could have faced stiff late enrollment penalties later on if they chose to enroll in Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage).

In July, Congresswoman Moore sent a letter signed by all Democratic members of the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation to HHS detailing the many benefits of keeping SeniorCare intact for both its beneficiaries and the federal government.

"During a time of skyrocketing prescription drug costs, SeniorCare beneficiaries pay only a small enrollment fee, low co-payments, and a modest deductible for a comprehensive prescription drug benefit. In fact, seniors below 160 percent of the poverty level pay no deductible at all," Congresswoman Moore said. "And with SeniorCare's cost savings to the federal government, this decision is a win-win situation for the people of Wisconsin and for the federal budget."

SeniorCare saves money by reducing enrollment in Medicaid due to fewer seniors being forced to use up all their income, savings, and assets in order to afford their enormous prescription drug costs. A study commissioned by AARP of Wisconsin also notes that every dollar currently spent on SeniorCare under the program's Pharmacy Plus waiver leverages \$4.35 from other sources, including manufacturer rebates and beneficiary cost-sharing.

Secretary Leavitt's decision ensures that SeniorCare will continue to operate through at least June 30, 2007, when the program's current waiver expires. Congresswoman Moore hopes to continue to work with Governor Jim Doyle and the rest of the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation in the future to secure the survival of SeniorCare beyond the middle of 2007

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